

1864
Army
Identity

A flourish activity and
interest in music helped
this student write a
moving JOURNAL ENTRY.

July 15, 1864

What happened last night touched me deeply, and I must work here in my journal to capture exactly the wonder that transfixed us all as we sang by a river. The recent battles had taken so many of our friends' lives that we were lounging in a kind of stupor. I thought of how the cruel Confederate fire had dropped Buddy to the bloody ground. Suddenly I began quietly singing Julia Ward Howe's mighty Battle Hymn of the Republic. First five or ten, then a hundred more of my comrades were singing with me in a powerful chorus that carried over the river. We stopped. Through the silence I heard some coughs and several of my men crying. Then over the river through its heavy mist came Reb voices in a growing chorus, singing "We are a band of brothers" from their stirring song The Bonnie Blue Flag. I looked around me. In the campfires' light, my fellow soldiers' eyes glowed as they looked across the river. When the Rebs ended their last chorus with the stirring words—"Hurrah! Hurrah! for the bonnie blue Flag that bears a single star"—a silence fell upon both armies. Suddenly one of my men yelled to the Rebs, "You Rebs got nice voices." A Reb then answered, "So do all you Damn Yankees." A cheering swelled up on both sides of the river. Music had made foes into brothers. And I cried.

Now I must write mother to let her know how I love her for teaching me the wonder of music. I remember

1865
Home
Identity

May 14, 1865
I read in the paper today that that despicable traitor Jefferson Davis and his wife were captured near Irvinville, Georgia, several days ago. When I told my dear Amanda that President Davis had been captured by Michigan boys from the 4th Cavalry, she slipped into her chair and began weeping for our dear lost son Abner. He would be proud of his Michigan comrades for their effort in bringing that scoundrel to justice. Abner would

Loss and anger were
going to gnaw at Americans
for generations.